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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Devote your hearts and souls to seeking the Lord your God."

To the leaders of the nations, to those who were about to help Solomon build one of the wonders of the ancient world, the great temple of Jerusalem, King David addressed these words.

To prepare themselves for the great task they were about to undertake, David exhorted: "Devote your hearts and souls to seeking the Lord, your God."

As Members of Congress, before you undertake your tasks for this Nation, before your discussions which will affect this country and have reactions around the world, before you try to help people of your district with any lasting effect, I plead with you: "Devote your hearts and your souls to seeking the Lord, your God."

Do not presume you know God or the Lord's plan or purpose for you or for this Nation. To seek the Lord is your first task, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to five 1-minute requests on each side.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this country has a long history of accepting immigrants from all over the world and offering them the potential to pursue a better life. America offers the rights, liberties, and dignity not seen anywhere else in the world.

Now the need for immigration reform has come to the forefront of our country and it is time to remove a carrot that dangles in front of the faces of illegal immigrants. As long as there is the promise of easy illegal employment, immigrants will continue to disregard our laws and penetrate our borders. We must enforce strict laws on employers who use illegal labor in order to discourage illegals coming to America looking for a free ride.

Mr. Speaker, we must do all that is possible to stop illegal immigration, and I remain committed to enacting measures that will effectively solve this problem.

VOTING RIGHTS REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Mr. JEFFERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, today this body will take up reauthorizing critical provisions of the historic Voting Rights Act for another 25 years.

Every year new cases of voter intimidation are reported to the Department of Justice, and every year changes to

voting laws threaten to curtail the power of minority voters. In my home State of Louisiana, the State legislature has faced objections to proposed election law changes every year since this historic bill was signed.

Mr. Speaker, my own mother had to pass a literacy test to vote just a few years before the Voting Rights Act became law, so it has special personal meaning for me. Yet, since its passage, challenges to minority voting rights continue in my home State and across the South.

It has been 41 years since President Johnson signed the original legislation that restored faith in our democracy and gave truth to President Lincoln's demand for a government of the people. After Hurricane Katrina, minorities in Louisiana face new obstacles in exercising our right to vote. The Voting Rights Act is just as relevant today as it was in 1965.

The struggle is not over, and we must not stop now. I urge my colleagues to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act now and in the spirit in which it was intended.

DHS CUTS ANTITERRORISM FUNDS FOR NEW YORK CITY

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise once again in opposition to the recent decision by the Department of Homeland Security to cut antiterrorism funds for New York City and Washington by 40 percent, while increasing spending for many smaller cities that are far less prone to terrorist attacks.

This week's revelation by the DHS Inspector General about the serious flaws in the National Asset Database

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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further underscores this irrational judgment by the DHS. Not only is DHS taking money away from the Nation's largest and most populated city, while another recent terror plot against New York came to light just last week, but its antiterrorism database listed the States of Indiana and Wisconsin with more potential terrorist targets than New York.

This New Yorker finds it painfully ironic that the DHS said that one of the reasons for the cut in funding is our lack of landmarks necessary to protect New York. Well, if that statement is not illogical enough, consider this. Among the items in its National Asset Database that the DHS does find necessary are a petting zoo in Alabama, a popcorn factory in Indiana, and Mule Day. And here is a picture of the Mule Day Parade in Tennessee.

As a New Yorker, it is certainly fair to question the rationale for our funding reduction if these are the priorities in other States which are receiving New York's money instead.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, over 51 years ago this month, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. America is a better country because of the Voting Rights Act.

The right to vote is the most fundamental thing our American citizens have to participate fully in American democracy. The Voting Rights Act is our Nation's most crucial and critical civil rights victory. The law commemorates the lives of those who marched, died and participated that we all might be better Americans and live and vote in the democracy that we love.

It is important today, as we debate the Voting Rights Act, that America pay particular attention. This law was good then, this law is good now, and it is needed for our future so that Americans might rise up and live in God's best interest.

Remember, today, urge your colleagues, call your Congressperson, tell them to vote to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act for 25 more years.

COMPETITION LOWERS HEALTH CARE COSTS

(Mr. MURPHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, did you know that a 25-year-old male in good health can purchase a policy for health insurance for \$960 in Kentucky and the same policy costs about \$5,800 in New Jersey? Did you know that a policy priced at \$1,600 in Iowa is \$2,600 in Washington State? And did you know

that that same policy costs about \$4,000 in Massachusetts?

One reason for this disparity is that families have little or no choice when it comes to selecting health care insurance. Where there is no competition, there is very little that drives cost down. Each State has its own health insurance mandates, and some of them are good, but there are about 1,800 of them all across the Nation, including provisions for acupuncturists, massage therapists, and hair replacements.

Many of these mandates may be helpful, but when you add up the cost, they can put health care out of the reach of families. Congress should establish a trial program allowing consumers and families to purchase health insurance policies from other States. Let us give families a choice instead of more costs.

I urge my colleagues to learn more about competition in health insurance by looking at my Web site at Murphy.house.gov. America needs us to go to work on this.

U.S. PEACE AND DIPLOMACY

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, nearly 4 years ago, this administration came before us and promoted their idea of peace and democracy in the Middle East. Their vehicle for accomplishing this? A unilateral first strike against Iraq and the subsequent occupation.

Let us reflect on this policy this morning. In Iraq, over 2,500 American soldiers have died, tens of thousands injured, over 100,000 innocent Iraqi civilians killed, and countless injured. We are mired in a civil war there, and violence is growing every day.

In Iran, international efforts at diplomacy have been undermined by our Iraq policy. This administration seems determined to repeat the disaster of Iraq in Iran, most recently by trying to link Iran to the attacks on Israel.

As a broader regional war breaks out between Israel and Lebanon, spurred on by Hezbollah, instead of trying to find ways to end the conflict by rescuing negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel, this administration, which has an unfortunate talent for war, is making statements which will contribute to escalation.

Israel urgently needs diplomatic assistance. The only way the U.S. can reclaim its role as a mediator is to speak and act like a mediator. You can bomb the world to pieces, but you can't bomb the world to peace.

LONE STAR VOICE: MARIBETH BURGESS RAY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, our individual heritage of the past is important, but

our future as Americans is more important. Many Americans trace their past through Ellis Island. Mrs. Maribeth Burgess Ray of Baytown, Texas, recently went there, and she says:

"While at Ellis Island, I found a profound statement. An article had a picture of a mother and her two sons. The newcomers' attire was that of the country from which they had fled. The statement was, 'If the ones who flee do not change their appearance and speech, they only bring what they fled from to America, thus changing America into the country that they were fleeing from.'"

Today, we forget what America is and what it stands for. If what you are fleeing from is so bad, leave it behind and adapt to what it is you are looking for. Let us keep America America, with the beautiful quilt of immigrants that make it up, but let us not turn America into something it is not. Don't let our borders be penetrated by the baggage that some refuse to leave behind.

Mr. Speaker, people who come to America should assimilate and just become Americans.

And that's just the way it is.

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MULTILINGUAL BALLOTS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when I was born, my grandparents could not express themselves in the constitutional right to vote. Today we have an opportunity to affirm the very basic values of America, and that is to reaffirm every American's right to vote without barrier or bar.

And so I rise to explain the King amendment which has given the wrong impression, and that is the amendment that would eliminate multilingual ballots for citizens. I ask my good friend what he would do for the young soldier who is an immigrant, who is a legal permanent resident and has offered his life in battle in Iraq and Afghanistan and who has managed to make legal permanent residents and then citizens of his own family who have a language barrier because of just recently coming to this country, maybe conversant enough to become citizens, but not enough to read a ballot.

This amendment is unconstitutional and un-American, and I hope that we will together, Republicans and Democrats, uphold the values of America.

SICK ATTEMPT TO RAISE CAMPAIGN CASH

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, politics unfortunately, can be